



Billy Bunter's Resolve!

A PLAY IN VERSE
FOR
AMATEUR ACTORS.

[NOTE.—As in the case of previous plays published in the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, performances may be given by parties of our readers, without fee or licence, on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.]

CHARACTERS :

HARRY WHARTON	Captain of the Remove.	PERCY BOLSOVER	.. The Bully of the Remove.
BOB CHERRY	} Wharton's Chosen Chums.	DOCTOR LOCKE	.. Headmaster of Greyfriars.
FRANK NUGENT		DAME MIMBLE	.. Proprietress of the School Tuckshop.
JOHNNY BULL			
HURREE SINGH			
BILLY BUNTER	.. The Famous Fat Boy of Greyfriars.		

ACT I.

SCENE.—No. 7 Study in the Remove Passage.

(BILLY BUNTER is seated at the table, scribbling industriously. There are piles of books in front of him, and he has a wet towel tied round his forehead. He grunts laboriously as he writes. Suddenly there is a loud knocking without.)

BUNTER (looking up):

Oh, dear! Confound that beastly knocking!
I can't get on; it's simply shocking.
A plague on any chap who enters!
I'm never free from my tormentors!

VOICE FROM WITHOUT:

Say, Billy! May we step inside?

BUNTER:

I wish you'd run away and hide!

CHERRY:

Rats! We'll do nothing of the sort.
We're coming in right now, old sport!
(Enter THE FAMOUS FIVE. They stare in astonishment at the studious BUNTER.)

WHARTON:

My only aunt! What's wrong with Billy?

BUNTER:

Nothing; I'm simply swotting, silly!

NUGENT:

Good gracious! Fancy Bunter swotting!

BULL:

The silly porpoise must be "rotting."

BUNTER:

I hope you fellows realise
I'm going to win the Founder's Prize,

This towel which adorns me now
Is meant to cool my fevered brow.
I wish I had a lump of ice ;
Its cooling properties are nice.
I'd also love a treacle tart,
To make me work with better heart.
But funds are very low, indeed,
So there's no prospect of a feed.
But, though I'm in a starving plight,
I'll carry on and swot all night !
However dull and dense I am,
I'll come out top in this Exam.

CHERRY :
You stupid bundle of conceit !
You'll stand no chance if you compete.
Your feeble brain can't tussle with
The brains of Todd and Vernon-Smith.
And as for Linley and the rest,
Methinks you'll have to give them best !

WHARTON :
You scarcely know a line of Greek ;
Your French makes everybody shriek.
The first exam. you ever sat in
Proved you were ignorant of Latin.
And any other Greyfriars " crammer "
Could give you points at English grammar.

HURREE SINGH :
That's so, my fat and foolish Billy !
To sit for the exam. is silly.
You'd never win the prize, I fear,
Not if you swotted for a year !
That, in a nutshell's the position ;
Give up this foolish, vain ambition !

BULL :
I echo what my friends have said,
So shut your books and go to bed !

WHARTON :
To sit up swotting half the night
Will make you ill, you silly kite !

BUNTER (rising to his feet and wagging his fore-
finger at the FAMOUS FIVE) :

Your speeches have been made in vain !
I know you think that I'm insane,
But listen ! I am out to win !
(It's all right, Bull ; you needn't grin !)
The prize is twenty pounds in cash ;
With such a sum I'll cut a dash.
I'll buy a hamper, crammed with tuck ;
Then buy another one, for luck !
I'll buy a wireless crystal set ;
Also a gramophone I'll get,

And with the balance that remains
I'll feed till I've internal pains !
That twenty pounds will be divine,
And very shortly 'twill be mine !

CHERRY :

You're optimistic, Billy—very !

BUNTER :

And not without good reason, Cherry !

NUGENT :

You'll finish bottom, I should say——

BUNTER :

Oh, really, Nugent ! Run away !

WHARTON :

It would not give me much surprise
To see him win the Booby Prize !
But as for getting first or second,
A miracle it would be reckoned !

CHERRY :

Take my advice and chuck this game !

BUNTER :

To get rich quick, Bob, is my aim.
I'm tired of being stony-broke ;
It's getting quite beyond a joke !
I never get enough to eat,
And not a soul will stand me treat.
The postman, when he comes at " brekker,"
Never enriches my exchequer
By bringing me some big donations
From all my well-to-do relations.
I'm tired of being poor and needy
And, though I'm not the least bit greedy,
I want to win that twenty pounds.
How perfectly divine it sounds !
But leave me now alone in peace,
And let this conversation cease.

WHARTON :

Well, Bunter, I admire your pluck,
And, honestly, I wish you luck.
But, if you had ten thousand tries,
You'd never win the Founder's Prize !

BUNTER :

Never's a long, long day, old chap :
Now buzz along ; get off the map !

NUGENT :

We'll leave the porpoise to his labours,
With Scott and Shakespeare for his neigh-
bours.

(Exit THE FAMOUS FIVE. BILLY BUNTER
settles down to work once more. He polishes
his spectacles and replaces them on his nose ;
then he picks up his pen, jabs it furiously

in the ink, and scribbles away as if for a wager.)

BUNTER (looking up):

I'll tackle this examination
With courage and determination.
Whilst others slumber in the dorm.,
I mean to take the world by storm.
And when I've won in this exam.,
I'll have a feed of eggs and ham.
The cry will go up, "BUNTER'S TOP!"
The place will flow with ginger-pop!
I'll strut around, in pomp and power,
And be the hero
of the hour!

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—THE
SCHOOL TUCKSHOP.

(DAME MIMBLE
is hovering behind
the counter, and
BOLSOVER MAJOR
is perched on a
stool, partaking of
pastries and ginger
beer.)

BOLSOVER:

Madam, these
doughnuts are a
treat!

The cream-buns,
too, are hard to
beat.

The juicy jam
tarts are divine—

Such luxuries
are in my line!

DAME MIMBLE (bobbing a curtsey):

Such compliments delight and cheer,
They ring like music in my ear.

But ere you praise me any more,
Perhaps you'll pay me three-and-four!

BOLSOVER:

Most certainly, my worthy Dame!
To pay up promptly is my aim.
You think, no doubt, I've not a groat,
But kindly change this five-pound note!

DAME MIMBLE (in astonishment):

My goodness! You're a millionaire!

BOLSOVER:

Not yet; but still, I don't despair.

DAME MIMBLE:

How did you come by all this wealth?

BOLSOVER:

An aunt of mine did good by stealth.
She posted me this handsome sum;
'Twas jolly good of her, by gum!
Another dish of pastries, please!
And here I'll sit, and take my ease.
(Enter BILLY BUNTER, very slowly, muttering
to himself).

BUNTER:

"To be, or not
to be? That is
the question!

Whether 'tis
nobler in the mind
to suffer

The slings and
arrows of out-
rageous fortune,

Or, to take arms
against a sea of
troubles,

And, by oppos-
ing, end them."

BOLSOVER:

Bunter! You
gave me quite a
start!

You're rattling
Shakespeare off by
heart.

BUNTER (ignoring
Bolsover)

"To die, to
sleep; to sleep—

perchance to dream,

Ay, there's the grub!"

BOLSOVER:

You're wrong; it should be "There's the
rub."

Not, as you put it, "There's the grub!"

BUNTER:

"For in that sleep of death what dreams
may come,

When we have cuffed off this mortal
shoil—"



"For this small loan I'm jolly grateful.
What tempting tarts! I'll have a plateful."



"Well, here's good fortune to 'Your Humble'!"

BOLSOVER:

My only aunt! That's worse and worse!
Bill Shakespeare never wrote such verse!
The sense of his remarks you spoil,
It's "shuffled off this mortal coil."
But don't keep spouting Shakespeare here!
What have you come for—ginger-beer?

BUNTER (*suddenly becoming aware of his surroundings*):

Hellup! You gave me quite a start!

BOLSOVER:

Why have you learned that stuff by heart?

BUNTER:

Because—you needn't raise your eyes—
I mean to win the Founder's Prize!
I quite intend to finish first;
I'll do it, even if I burst!

BOLSOVER:

I hear you've swotted night and day.

BUNTER:

Yes, and I'm ready for the fray!

BOLSOVER:

And do you really hope to win?

BUNTER:

All subjects I'm well grounded in.

BOLSOVER:

You think you'll beat the other kids?

BUNTER:

I'm certain of the twenty quids!

BOLSOVER:

If optimism breeds success,
You'll win the Founder's Prize, I guess!

BUNTER:

You've guessed correctly, just for once.
You needn't think that I'm a dunce.
I might have been, a week ago,
Since then I've made big strides, you know.
I know my Latin and my Greek,
Each foreign language I can speak.
I've swotted up Geography,
And German, and Topography.
I'm versed in Physiology,
And Science, and Conchology.
I've dug my intellectual tusk in
The works of Carlyle and of Ruskin.
I've wandered through the Courtfield streets
Reciting yards and yards of Keats.
I've used my brains in Botany
(You think I haven't got any)
I'm simply bound to come out top,
And then—why, I shall buy this shop.

BOLSOVER (*greatly impressed*):

You really think you stand a chance?

BUNTER:

I've won those quidlets in advance.

BOLSOVER:

By Jove! You've got the confidence:

BUNTER:

I've also got the skill and sense.

DAME MIMBLE:

You'll cause a wonderful sensation
By winning this examination.
You've studied for it day and night,
And so you ought to win all right.

BUNTER (*turning to Bolsover*):

I hear your Aunt Jemima wrote
Enclosing you a five-pound note.
So may I beg a little loan?
Please don't reveal a heart of stone.
Ten shillings will secure a snack,
And—when I've won—I'll pay you back.
In fact, I'll pay you back fifteen,
So come on, Bolsy! Don't be mean.

BOLSOVER:

You seem so certain of success,
I'd better make the loan, I guess.

BOLSOVER produces a ten-shilling note from his pocket and hands it to BUNTER, who dances

with delight. He capers round the tuckshop, knocking several stools over.)

BUNTER :

Thanks very much indeed for this,
I almost feel inclined to kiss—

BOLSOVER (*jumping back hastily*) :

Nunno! Stand clear! Keep off the grass!
I'm not a girl, you frabjous ass.

BUNTER :

For this small loan, I'm jolly grateful.
What tempting tarts! I'll have a plateful.
I'll also have some Chelsea buns,
Likewise some doughnuts—jammy ones.
Some buttered scones will be a treat,
And macaroons are nice to eat.
Then, when I've had a rabbit pie,
Poached eggs on toast I think I'll try.
And then—I hope I shall not burst—
With ginger-pop I'll quench my thirst!

DAME MIMBLE :

Hand me your money, if you please!

BUNTER :

Right-ho! And then I'll take my ease.

(BUNTER passes the ten-shilling note over the counter. He is then served with his requirements, he perches himself on a stool beside BOLSOVER, and gets busy.)

BUNTER :

I say! I'm in the seventh heaven.
These tarts are prime. I'll eat eleven.

BOLSOVER :

I hope you will enjoy your snack,
But don't forget to pay me back.

BUNTER :

For your ten bob you'll get fifteen
When I have won the prize, old bean!

BOLSOVER (*aside*) :

And if he fails to win that prize,
I'll punch his nose and black his eyes,
I can't afford to lose ten bob,
And if I do, I'll make him sob!

BUNTER (*raising a glass of ginger-beer*) :

I say! I wish you wouldn't mumble!
Well, here's good fortune to "Your
Humble!"

END OF ACT II.



"I think the Head's a heartless beast! My wrath against him is increased. Why do you glare at me, Bob Cherry? It is ill-mannered of you—very!"

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The front portion of Big Hall. The Head's rostrum is seen, also two forms in front of it. THE FAMOUS FIVE are seated on one form; BILLY BUNTER and BOLSOVER MAJOR occupy the form behind. All are looking very excited. (BUNTER nudging WHARTON in the back):*

Say, Wharton, this suspense is awful!

To keep chaps waiting isn't lawful.

I'm in a fever of suspense

And my excitement is intense.

My heart is beating like a hammer,

My speech is just a nervous stammer.

I'm in a fluster and a flurry.

Oh, dear! I wish the Head would hurry!

CHERRY:

He won't be very long, old son

And then we'll quickly know who's won.

BUNTER:

The winner is myself, of course!

BOLSOVER:

If not, I'll make you feel remorse.

(The juniors shuffle their feet, and wait with growing impatience for the Head to arrive.)

BUNTER:

To keep us waiting is a shame.

The Head must learn to play the game.

He knows that we're on tenterhooks,

And yet he's buried in his books.

I really think he has forgotten

To give us the result. It's rotten.

(Enter the HEAD, whilst BUNTER is speaking.

He carries a cane and approaches from the rear:

and the fat junior is not aware of his presence.

The other juniors turn round and see him, and

they try to warn BUNTER, by signs and nudges,

that the HEAD has arrived. BUNTER, however,

wattles on.)



"Come forward, boy, and take your due.
The Founder's Prize is won by you."

I think the Head's a heartless beast!

My wrath against him is increased.

Although, of course, I realise

That I have won the Founder's Prize,

It's only fair that Dr. Locke

(Who called us here at four o'clock)

Should come and tell us the results.

Confound the Head, and all his faults!

Why do you glare at me, Bob Cherry?

It is ill-mannered of you—very!

CHERRY *(in a stage whisper)*:

The Head is here, you silly chump!

BUNTER:

Don't pull my leg; you made me jump!

THE HEAD *(in tones of thunder)*:

Yes, Bunter! I am truly present!

CHERRY *(aside)*:

Bunter will find this shock unpleasant!

BUNTER *(in great alarm)*:

Oh, crumbs! I didn't see you here, sir!

That frown of yours is getting fiercer!

THE HEAD:

How dare you take my name in vain?

I will administer the cane!

BUNTER:

Oh, help! I never said a word!

All those remarks you overheard

Were not intended, sir, for you,

So please don't get into a stew.

For Mr. Quelch my words were meant,

And not, sir, to your detriment!

THE HEAD:

Bunter! You do not speak the truth.

You are a most misguided youth.

You sought to slander your Headmaster—

Such conduct always brings disaster!

Hold out your hand, you wretched boy!

HURREE SINGH (*aside*):

The lickfulness he'll now enjoy!

(BUNTER gingerly extends his hand, and the HEAD administers three sharp cuts with the cane. BUNTER'S yells of anguish awaken the echoes.)

THE HEAD (*panting*):

Such punishment is richly due—

BUNTER:

Yow-ow! Oh, dear! I'm hurt! Yarooo!

(THE HEAD then mounts the rostrum, and produces a sheet of paper from his pocket. There is an excited murmur from the assembled juniors.)

THE HEAD:

Silence! My boys, I will proceed,
For your enlightenment, to read
The names, also the marks allotted
To those whom—you would say—have
"swotted."

BUNTER:

Of course, sir, my name heads the list?

THE HEAD:

Bunter, I warn you to desist!

BUNTER:

But surely, sir, I top the bill?

THE HEAD:

Base boy, be silent, and sit still!

BOLSOVER (*aside, shaking his fist*):

If Bunter hasn't bagged the prize,

His nose will
swell to twice its
size!

I'll punch him
here, I'll punch him
there,

I'll thump and
clump him every-
where!

He's got ten bob
by false pretences.

My hat! I must
have lost my senses

To lend him such
a princely sum.

If he's been
beaten, I'll be
glum!

THE HEAD:

Let this chatter-
ing cease at once.

Bunter, you are an arrant dunce!

You sat for the Examination,
And worked, no doubt, with desperation.

But such a shameful lack of knowledge
Brings great discredit on this College.

I have your papers with me now,
They make me frown, with furrowed brow.

Your writing, Bunter, is appalling,

I really never saw such scrawling!

Your spelling is both weird and weak,

So are your Latin, French, and Greek.

While as for your Geography

Such ignorance amazes me!

You tell us, wretched boy, that Russia

Was once the capital of Prussia!

You then remark that Asia Minor

Is a young 'fag' who hails from China.

Brussels is noted for its sprouts

You tell us—but I have my doubts!

Chelsea for Chelsea Buns is famous—

Oh, what an utter ignoramus!

Six marks alone you have obtained:

The winner, ninety-eight has gained!

BUNTER (*in horrified tones*):

But, sir, there must be some mistake—

WHARTON:

Shush! Hold-your tongue, for goodness'
sake!

BUNTER:

I can't have failed in the Exam.,

Look how I had
to swot and cram!

THE HEAD:

Bunter, your
brain must be
befogged.

I really feel you
should be flogged!

BUNTER (*plead-
ingly*):

Don't put that
threat in execution!

Think of my
weakly constitu-
tion!

THE HEAD:

The boy who
won, with ninety-
eight,

Is Nugent, I am
pleased to state.



Oh, dear! I think an earthquake hit me,
Or some mad monster bruised and bit me!"

Come forward, boy, and take your due.
The Founder's Prize is won by you!

(FRANK NUGENT steps up to the rostrum, amid loud cheering and handclapping. THE HEAD presents him with the Founder's Prize.)

BUNTER:

It isn't fair! I must protest!
I'm sure I've beaten all the rest!

THE HEAD:

Bunter, I warn you to be silent,
Or my next action will be violent!
Nugent! Sincere congratulation
On winning this Examination.

(THE HEAD shakes hands with FRANK NUGENT, and then withdraws. BUNTER, fearing the wrath of BOLSOVER MAJOR, attempts to rush out of the Hall, but he is too late. BOLSOVER pounces upon him, and drags him back.)

BOLSOVER:

You played me false, you wretched worm,
And now I mean to make you squirm!

BUNTER (*struggling wildly*):

Help! Rescue! Wharton! Cherry! Bull!
This bullying beast has lost his wool!

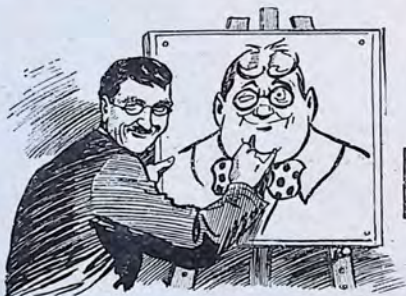
(The furious and indignant BOLSOVER proceeds to use BILLY BUNTER as a punching-ball. After smiting him in sundry places, he leaves his victim sitting dazedly on the floor, groping for his spectacles. Exit THE FAMOUS FIVE, laughing. Exit BOLSOVER MAJOR, snorting.)

BUNTER (*still in a sitting posture*):

Oh, dear! I think an earthquake hit me,
Or some mad monster bruised and bit me!
I don't know if I'm on my head,
Or balanced on my heels instead!
I feel just like a punctured tyre,
I'm certain I shall soon expire.
And then I'll go to some bright land
Where no Exams. are ever planned!
I'll draw a last, long, lingering breath
Then, like a hero, meet my death!

CURTAIN.

THE



END !

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DON'T FORGET—

That all the many friends whom you have met in the splendid school stories in this volume of the Holiday Annual may be found every week in the Companion Papers !

To my numerous new friends who have enjoyed the stories of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, and Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, I wish to point out that it is the easiest thing possible to keep in touch with all these popular favourites all the year round.

The "MAGNET" is published every Monday morning, and its chief feature is a long, complete tale of Greyfriars by Frank Richards, with Harry Wharton and his chums of the Greyfriars Remove to the fore.

In the "BOYS' FRIEND," also published on Mondays, we get a capital Rookwood yarn every week featuring Jimmy Silver, Tubby Muffin, Lovell, the egregious Carthew, and all the comrades of the cheery Fourth Form ; while in the "POPULAR," which appears each Tuesday, we have complete yarns of all the schools—Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood.

The "GEM" comes out on Wednesday, and in that famous weekly story paper the spotlight will be found on Tom Merry, the celebrated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the other high-spirited leaders of the junior school at St. Jim's, who help to make this series by Martin Clifford a triumph.

These facts are mentioned partly in response to the myriad enquiries which reach me concerning the "Holiday Annual" stories. "Must we wait a whole year for more?" is the burden of these queries. Not the very least occasion ! My friends and supporters all over the world can have many cheery hours with the jolly characters each passing week.

In conclusion I must also draw attention to the "SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY," published monthly. This 4d. Library gives book-length tales of all the favourite school-boy characters in fiction.—THE EDITOR.

The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



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